



TRANSFORMING HUMAN SYSTEMS DYNAMICS (HSD)

Human Systems

Each of us is a member of a wide variety of groups of people, both formal and informal. These 'human systems' include teams, departments, companies, organisations, villages, communities, networking groups, families, cities, countries. In any group, habits form, patterns of behaviour emerge, norms for 'our way of doing things' evolve. These habits and patterns might be useful, productive and invigorating, or they might be unhelpful, destructive and draining.

The discipline of Human Systems Dynamics (HSD) is about the study of groups of people (human systems), the habits and patterns within them (dynamics), and finding and applying concepts and tools to help those groups become more productive and fulfilling.

HSD uses metaphors from the physical, mathematical and computer sciences to help practitioners understand what is happening in everyday interactions in organisations and groups. The concepts are grounded in science and they continue to emerge as we explore the complex dynamics of human systems. In spite of their application to complex and challenging fields, these metaphors and tools are easy to understand and deploy.

HSD in the Business Environment

HSD helps:

- CEOs and other leaders understand and respond to the forces that shape their opportunities, such as unpredictable markets, information overload, teams in turmoil, shifting demands for change from customers, stakeholders, and employees
- Change management programme leaders prepare for change, design interventions, implement action, and evaluate outcomes. HSD models and methods work at all levels - individual, group, institution, and community. They bring together diverse and previously divergent approaches, enhancing the efficacy of change management programmes
- Managers of teams to shift conditions for more effective, productive working
- Coaches and facilitators see, understand and intervene more effectively moment to moment – enabling them to respond to the complex dynamics that show up within and between individuals; enabling them to work more consciously and effectively

Companies that have used HSD include 3M, Deutsche Telekom, Merrill Lynch, Shell, Sony and Target.

HSD has been contrasted with, for example, Six Sigma:

- Both are approaches supporting system improvement and change, each with a different yet complementary focus
- Six Sigma follows a defined sequence of steps to identify and remove the causes of defects and minimise variability in the output of processes. It works best where there are strong data sets to allow statistical analysis of well-defined processes
- HSD practitioners see and influence patterns in human relationships. When people interact, complex patterns emerge; HSD helps people cope with those patterns. It works where the human aspect is vital eg in team coherence, performance, change agendas

HSD in Practice

HSD is a pioneering discipline being used to stimulate change in commercial, public and third sector organisations around the world:

- An international financial services firm used ideas from HSD to develop the adaptive capacity of middle managers involved in operations and information systems development and support
- A highly diversified international securities and investment company used HSD to develop more flexible planning techniques, increase leadership capacity and improve communications across the organization and around the world
- A large community hospital consistently earns the highest ratings for customer service and patient care in the US. They have been using the concepts and theories of complexity - a foundation of HSD - to examine their services and practices for the past five years
- Two major religious institutions used HSD to recognize and articulate the complex relationships, culture and behaviours at work and used it as a strategic tool to design and lead organisational change. One of these projects brought about change at an international level
- HSD was used to support the creation of a social enterprise that 'spun out' of the regional NHS system. The entire team was introduced to HSD principles and approaches which supported them to navigate successfully through an intense, complex transition

For more information contact:
Louie Gardiner
 The only certified HSD Professional in Scotland
louie.gardiner@potent6.co.uk www.potent6.co.uk
<http://www.hsdinstitute.org/>

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FEEDBACK FROM HUMAN SYSTEMS DYNAMICS WORKSHOP

Edinburgh Coaching Hub, 19 July 2011

Jane Mudd: What a fantastic use of two hours. Thank you Louie for some great insights into the world of HSD and to everyone there for making the evening so thought provoking and worthwhile. Looking forward to receiving the slides and links...I want to know more.....

LinkedIn recommendation: Louie facilitated a short introductory session on HSD to a group of coaches, of which I was one. I found her approach professional, welcoming, inclusive and creative, her knowledge and insights inspiring and her passion for the subject addictive. Thanks Louie.

Mac Farquhar: Well done Louie, that was a real eye-opener of an event, made all the more engaging by your spontaneous creativity and insights. Loved the unexpected link with quantum science...

Erick Rainey: Well well well Louie that was a totally amazing session. Thank you for taking the time to introduce us and let us dip our toe to what is undeniably an incredible subject. I especially liked it when you asked us to stop and notice any patterns that were in the emerging in the container(s). I also liked the flip chart diagram that had the agreements and certainty on the X and Y axis. And the "so what?" challenge. It forced me into thinking about how I can use this information. It was all very enlightening and informative. Thanks again.

Louise Roberts: Thanks for a really interesting evening and wonderful to see how it flowed. Really interesting topic which brought lots of insights and plenty of thought-provoking questions. Thanks for sharing your knowledge. Look forward to learning more about Human Systems Dynamics.

Jackie Cameron: Can I echo what Jane, Mac and Erick said....I said last night that I had had my serious thinking face on during the session and I realise today how much I had taken in!

Julie Drybrough: Thought provoking session...Loving systems thinking

Euan Cowie: Many thanks Louie for a fascinating session, I am left reflecting on the range of concepts you introduced and how they make sense in my own work. In particular I am interested in the implications of the 3 conditions for system self organising and how that

affects organisational development. I want to know more.

Graham Walkinshaw: Thanks Louie for a session full of reflections for me. It has taken a couple of days for it all to settle in as there was soooo much in what you offered. I notice now that I am having many questions coming up about the session - 'What about the assumptions stuff'? 'What happens when the Container changes itself'? and and.... I needed the couple of days to let what you offered sit in and I can see even more that there is such a depth to the HSD material that I know I will want to learn more. I can see me using the tools that you offered on the night already! Thanks for that in itself. I would welcome some further briefings.

LinkedIn recommendation: Louie offered a short presentation on the concepts and thinking around Human System Dynamics as part of the Edinburgh Coaching Hub monthly meetings. I found the topic pushed me into a deeply reflective place - making connections with some of my own work, thinking and training approaches and I look forward to future sessions on this work. Louie's style was challenging and one of the most flexible and spontaneous styles I have experienced in a long time. Not an approach that would be 'comfortable' for everyone - but added to the learning experience for me and what's all the fuss about being comfortable?

Mark Eyre: I think everyone else has said it all. Thanks Louie for a thought provoking session. It certainly got me thinking, and I too like the quantum science link. Great stuff!

Rick Harrison: Louie, thanks for the excellent session, I like to go away from events with a bit more knowledge and a curiosity to find out some more... I loved it... !

LinkedIn recommendation: I had the privilege of being at a session delivered by Louie in Edinburgh as an introduction to Human System Dynamics. The session was very thought-provoking and engaging, helping to reveal the benefits and potential of this topic. Louie facilitated the session "in the moment" brilliantly to highlight the key themes of the topic. Highly recommended.

To learn how to use HSD to transform your coaching, leadership, teams and organisation, contact:

Louie Gardiner
louie.gardiner@potent6.co.uk
www.potent6.co.uk
<http://www.hsdinstitute.org/>